1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

000 461 333 335 which are not found usually in the people of India. He is not above manual labour, and even the Khasi clerk in the Government offices is quite ready to take his turn at the hoe in his potato garden. The men make excellent stonemasons and carpenters, and are ready to learn fancy carpentry and mechanical work. They are inveterate chewers of *supari* and the pan leaf (when they can get the latter), both men, women, and children; distances in the interior being often measured by the number of betel-nuts that are usually chewed on a journey. They are not addicted usually to the use of opium or other intoxicating drugs. They are, however, hard drinkers, and consume large quantities of spirit distilled from rice or millet. Rice beer is also manufactured; this is used not only as a beverage, but also for ceremonial purposes. Spirit drinking is confined more to the inhabitants of the high plateaux and to the people of the War country, the Bhois and Lyngams being content to partake of rice beer. The Mikirs who inhabit what is known as the "Bhoi" country, lying to the north of the district, consume a good deal of opium, but it must be remembered that they reside in a malarious forest country, and that the use of opium, or some other prophylactic, is probably beneficial as a preventive of fever. The Khasis, like other people of Indo-Chinese origin, are much addicted to gambling. The people, and especially those who inhabit the War country, are fond of litigation. Col. Bivar remarks, "As regards truthfulness the people do not excel, for they rarely speak the truth unless to suit their own interests." Col. Bivar might have confined this observation to the people who live in the larger centres of population, who have been much in contact with the denizens of the plains. The inhabitants of the far interior are, as a rule, simple and straightforward people, and are quite as truthful and honest as peasants one meets in other countries. My impression is that the Khasis are not less truthful certainly than other Indian communities. McCosh, writing in 1837, speaks well of the Khasis. The following is his opinion of them:—"They are a powerful, athletic race of men, rather below the middle size, with a sublimeness of gait and demeanour. They are fond of their mountains, and look down with contempt upon the degenerate race of the

276 804 273 276 751 525 577 [47]

[the Khasi ---- Assam p.1]

shield of Cherrapunji is used as a protection from rain. Those of Maharam and Mawiang are each of a peculiar pattern. Smaller shields are used as protections from the sun or merely for show, and there are specially small sizes for children. Then there are the different kinds of basket (ki kâsh) which are carried on the back, along across the forehead by a cane head-strap. These, again, are of different sizes. They are, however, always of the same conical shape, being round and broad-mouthed at the top and gradually tapering to a point at the bottom. A bamboo cover is used to protect the contents of the basket from rain. There is a special kind of basket made of cane or bamboo with a cover, which is used for carrying articles on a journey. These baskets, again, are of different sizes, the largest and best that the writer has seen being manufactured at Bandirai, in the south-western portion of the hills. Paddy is husked in a wooden mortar by means of a heavy wooden pestle. These are to be seen all over the hills. The work of husking paddy is performed by the women. A bamboo sieve is sometimes used for sifting the husked rice, a winnowing fan being applied to separate the husk. The cleaned rice is exposed to the sun in a bamboo tray. Paddy is stored in a separate store-house in large circular bamboo receptacles. These hold sometimes as much as 30 maunds* of grain. Large baskets are also used for keeping paddy in. In every Khasi house is to be found the net bag which is made out of pineapple fibre, or of a stout, the Assamese *nihe* (*Boehmeria nivea*). These bags are of two sizes, the larger one for keeping cowries in, the cowrie in former days having been used instead of current coin in these hills, the smaller for the ever necessary betel-nut. *Pân* leaves are kept in a bamboo tube, and tobacco leaves in a smaller one. Lime for eating with betel-nut, is kept in a metal box, sometimes of silver, which is made in two separate parts held together by a chain. The box is called in *shawan*, and is used all over the hills. This box is also used for divination purposes, one end of it being held in the hand, and the other, by means of the chain, being allowed to swing

* The maund is 82 lbs.

1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR? Khasi AR?

The most important crop on the southern side of the hills is the orange, which has already been referred to in the paragraph dealing with agriculture.

The oranges are sold by the *syuk* or 100, which is not a 100 literally, but somewhat over 2,000 oranges. Different places have different *syuks*. At Phali Hat, on the Dopgumi River, the *syuk* is computed as follows :—

1 Hat = 4 oranges.
5 Hats = 1 Shari.
100 Shaws = six *syuk* (one hundred).
= 2,000 oranges.

At Shella the computation is slightly different, being as follows :—

1 Gai = 6 oranges.
5 Gais = 2 oranges = 32 oranges.
6 Shaws = 1 hola = 120 oranges.
17 holas = 2 shaws = six *syuk* (100)
= 2,020 oranges.

By another method of calculation the *syuk* consists of 2,240 oranges.

The price per *syuk* varies from about 10 rupees in good years to Rs. 40, when the orange harvest has been a poor one.

The lime is also cultivated, not extensively, but along with the orange. The lime can be grown with success at a higher altitude than the orange. There is extensive betel-nut and *pán* cultivation on the southern slopes of the hills. The betel-nut tree is cultivated in the same manner as in the plains, except that the trees are planted nearer to one another. The trees bear when eight to ten years old. A portion of the crop is sold just after it has been plucked; this is called a 'wet nut,' and is the more common. The remainder of the crop is kept in large baskets, which are placed in tanks containing water, the baskets being completely immersed. This kind of betel-nut is called a 'wet nut.' The Khasis, like the Assamese, prefer the fresh betel-nut. They do not relish the dry *supári* so much.

The principal *pán* gardens are on the south side of the hills, *pán* not being grown on the northern slopes, except in the neighbourhood of Jirang. The *pán* creepers are raised from cuttings, the latter being planted close to the trees up which they are to be trained. The creeper is manured with lime

446

4 ch'ing	equal	1 kyuda
5 kyuda	"	1 peisa or 5 dandi
4 peisa	"	1 anna
16 anna	"	1 tyugka
15 tyugka	"	1 muher keiar equals 20.63 gold marks

Ref The following norms are valid for wares sold according to weight:

4 ruas	equals	1 tula
1 1/2 tula	"	1 satsha
5 satsha	"	1 shatak
4 shatak	"	1 peuea
4 peuea	"	1 ser
5 ser	"	1 pusari
8 pusari	"	1 sun
27 1/2 sun	"	1 ton equals 20 Hundredweight

The following norms are valid for wares which are sold according to the square foot:

4 sauding	equals	1 sanda
20 sanda	"	1 shatak
16 shatak	"	1 satha
20 satha	"	1 sigha equals 120 square feet

The following norms are in general valid for wares which are sold by the piece:

12 tylli	equals	1 gorjon
20 tylli	"	1 kuri
5 kuri	"	1 sish (hundred)
24 tea	"	1 disia
20 diata	"	1 ria
10 ria	"	1 big bah

[107] The sale of oranges is an exception. [104] These appear on the market by the thousands. This fruit is sold by the spah, i.e., the hundred, but this is not to be taken literally. For the spah have various meanings according to the region. Thus the people on the Bogapani River (in Phali) sell according to the following system:

1	hali	equals	4 oranges
6	hali	"	1 bhar
100	bhar	"	1 spah, i.e., 2800 oranges

They are reckoned as follows in Shella:

1 gai	equal	6 oranges
5 gai and 2 oranges	"	1 bhar
4 bhar	"	1 hola
27 hola and 2 bhar	"	1 spah or 5400 oranges

The price for a spah varies from 10 to 20 rupees (tynga), according to the amount of fruit that appears at the market. [435]

Quai leaves (tympai) are sold according to the following scale:

2 ale	equal	1 jur
10 jur	"	1 khongshi
5 khongshi	"	1 blah
4 blah	"	1 tap
20 tap	"	1 kuri
4 kuri	"	1 shalia

But among the War the quai leaves are sold [435]

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

435 439 [243] 273 435

at the rate of two or three ears for a farthing; and sugar-cane, the cultivation of which is also very limited, at from a little over a farthing to three-farthings per cane. A fermented liquor called *kadam*, made from rice, is sold at from three-farthings to threepence a quart, according to strength; and a distilled spirit called *phatika*, or *kadiad-kdrak*, at from threepence to fourpence-halfpenny a quart. This latter description of liquor is sometimes made very strong. No records exist by which the present prices of the above articles can be compared with the rates ruling ten years ago. The maximum price of rice during the famine of 1866-67 was 5 *sers* 6 *chhatiks* for the rupee, or about £1 a hundredweight.

[731]

• 804 805

MEASURES, WEIGHTS, ETC.—The Hill people have no proper measurement of time or distance. If there be any standard for measuring distance, it is by the number of *pán* a man chews in the course of a journey, generally about one every half hour. In some parts of the District, land is measured by a stick called *ka dieng-kong*, varying in length from six to seven cubits. Liquids are measured in gourds of different measures, varying from half a *chhatik* to a *ser*, and also in bamboo tubes. Rice, potatoes, beans, etc. are measured in baskets, varying in size in different markets from two to eighty pounds.

805

In the Khási Hills the inhabitants reckon eight days in the week, named as follows:—(1) Lyn-kah; (2) Nong-krem; (3) Um-long; (4) Rang-hep; (5) Shillong; (6) Pom-tih; (7) Um-nih; (8) Yeo-duh. In the Jáintiá Hills the eight days are named thus:—(1) Kyllao; (2) Pyn-aing; (3) Máo-long; (4) Máo-siang; (5) Máo-shai; (6) Pyn-kat; (7) Thym-blein; (8) Ka-hat. The Khási months of the year, calculated by moons, are as follow:—(1) U Kylla lynkot; (2) U Ryn-pang; (3) U Lyber; (4) U Laiong; (5) U Jimmang; (6) U Jullow; (7) U Nai-táing; (8) U Nai-lar; (9) U Nai-lúr; (10) U Rysow; (11) U Nai-wing; (12) U Noh-prah.

464 423

LANDLESS LABOURING CLASSES.—There is, and always has been, a large class of labourers in the District who neither rent nor possess any land. Women and children are employed in manual out-door labour of all kinds.

423 [427]

VARIETIES OF LAND TENURE can hardly be said to exist. There is nothing whatever resembling the relations between landlord and tenant throughout the Khási Hills. The lands as a rule are either ancestral property or belong to village communities, and are cultivated under unwritten but well-understood agreements. Of the wide